

TRAINING DOGS TO LEAD THE BLIND  
J. L. Sinykin

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## Training Dogs to Lead the Blind

*Under Guidance of Herr Kreimer, LaSalle Kennels' Endeavor to Produce Dogs Which Perform Perfectly*

By J. L. Sinykin

I have been reading recently a number of articles relating to the training of dogs to lead the blind. They have been most interesting and it pleases me a great deal to know of others who realize the importance of this great work.

When I was last in New York attending one of the meetings, I stated to the committee my intentions of trying to bring to the La Salle Kennels Herr Kreimer of Munich, Germany, to take charge of the training of dogs to lead the blind. Prior to that meeting—more than a year ago, in fact—I had imported several dogs that were trained in Munich by Mr. Kreimer. It is a fact that the first trained dog that ever landed on American soil was Lux of La Salle, which was retrained at the La Salle Kennels and presented to Senator Schall. At that time, also, I heard of the organization of a school at Nashville for this work.

After considerable correspondence, I completed my negotiations for bringing Herr Kreimer into the United States to take charge of the Kennels. Mr. Kreimer arrived in Minneapolis last July, coming to us direct from a school for the blind at Munich, where he was in charge of training the dogs. Prior to that time, he was in Berlin in

charge of other schools, and at an earlier stage, at Ettleberg. The United States government made it possible to bring Mr. Kreimer over without much delay and he brought with him the following dogs: Almo v. Eckenweiler, Melot v. Mangoldstein, Junker v. d. Wolfshalde and Kautz v. Hain.

Mr. Kreimer immediately reorganized the kennels, making them a replica of the training ground they have in Germany, and is continuing his work with the La Salle Kennels.

While I was on the Pacific coast on other business, I ran into a very interesting man by the name of Christensen. This man had been blind for fourteen years. He had heard of the work I was doing and I promised that I would have Mr. Kreimer go to Los Angeles to give him the necessary training and then would turn over to him one of the trained dogs. This dog was Elmo.

Mr. Kreimer's work has been most successful. His method of training men and his insight into the character of the blind with whom he has to deal, prove him an expert in this work. Mr. Christensen's training was completed in fourteen days. His letter is appended.

There is a great deal of work going on at the



W. A. Christensen, of Los Angeles, with Elmo.



La Salle Kennels. I have never been much of a breeder for the purpose of selling dogs, but have a number of selected animals, some of which have been honored by very favorable moving picture mention. My aim has been to produce first class, perfectly trained dogs, to work for the men who need them most—the blind. I have adopted the slogan “His Master’s Eyes.”

An estate of over fifty acres, together with the finest equipment, has been turned over to a staff of reliable executives and an outstanding trainer for the purpose of training dogs to lead the blind.

I consider Mr. Kreimer one of Germany’s outstanding exponents of this art, and a man of intelligence and high integrity. He is particularly adapted for this work which is so vastly different from training dogs for police work.

I have information concerning a case in Germany where sixty trainers were working in a school and rapidly turning out animals to meet the demand for dogs to lead the blind. These trainers had from ten to fifteen years’ experience in their profession. The record shows that after they had turned out three hundred and fifty dogs which were supplied to blind veterans, two hundred and eighty-five were returned, a result of incomplete and imperfect training.

With this example in mind, La Salle Kennels is not going into the business of turning out dogs wholesale, nor are they going to select dogs which are not 100% shepherds or which are deficient physically or in temperament. All dogs being trained at our school have nerves of steel and no gun or anything else can upset them. We do not wish to go on record to show how fast we can train them or how cheaply we can sell them to the unfortunate people whom they must serve. We wish to guarantee that every dog released from La Salle Kennels will perform in a 100% manner with no apologies.

My writing this letter is prompted by many inquiries from all parts of the country. I do not wish to be misunderstood by my fellowmen and fellow-breeders who are in love with the shepherd dog and who are trying to improve and elevate the breed. Our work is the fruition of a dream which I have long treasured. It is not a commercial enterprise and is not undertaken with any money-making ideas in mind.

Three years of research work and the con-

sulting of many authorities have given me considerable insight in to the problems of the blind. Such knowledge is at the disposal of those who need it. La Salle Kennels are open to all people who are interested in our activity. The estate where the work is going on is six miles out of Minneapolis. We stand ready to prove to the country at large that the principles and method of teaching the shepherd dog to lead the blind are to be a success and a service to humanity.

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Mr. J. L. Sinykin,  
LaSalle Kennels,  
Minneapolis, Minn.,

My dear Mr. Sinykin:

After five week’s experience in work and play and constant day and night companionship with Elmo, I know you will be glad to hear me say that all my doubts and fears that I had at first that any dog could be trained to successfully lead a blind person through the streets and traffic of Los Angeles have been swept away and their place filled with confidence, freedom, enjoyment, and admiration and wonder in and for this wonderful dog, Elmo.

It would be difficult without writing a book on the subject for me to tell you about the joy of independence and freedom he has brought to me, and the strong affection that has sprung up between us, and the manner in which he behaves in the home and in public and discharges his duties as a leader of the blind.

Elmo has proved in this short time that he has all the qualities recommended for him, plus; and now that the training given me by Mr. Kreimer, with practice, is beginning to show results, I am able to function with Elmo better each day, and he with me.

I want to take this opportunity to tell you that I appreciate your bringing Mr. Kreimer from Minneapolis to Los Angeles and permitting him to remain with me for fourteen days during which time he gave me his undivided attention in training me to work with Elmo. This consideration I feel has been of inestimable value to me. You are indeed fortunate in having such a master at this work of training dogs to lead the blind and in training the blind to be led by the dogs. Mr. Kreimer not only understands his dogs, but he has the ability to teach

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*OFFICIAL ORGAN OF*  
**THE SHEPHERD DOG CLUB of WESTERN NEW YORK**  
59 BROAD STREET, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

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A meeting of the club was held on February 3 at 59 Broad Street. Present were Mr. Spain, Mr. Giroud, Mr. Friedrichs, Mr. Friedrichs, Jr., Mr. Edgcombe, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Welvaert, Miss Mimmack.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

Mr. Welvaert and Miss Mimmack resigned as President and Secretary, respectively.

A motion was made, passed and carried that Mr. Giroud be elected as President, and Mr. Edgcombe be elected as Secretary.

Mr. Cameron and Mr. Hord of Rochester were elected to membership.

The club is sending a cup to the Buffalo show for best in the novice class, either sex. This is being done to encourage owners of young shepherds, just starting to show.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be held March 3.

J. EDGECOMBE, Secretary.

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## Training Blind Leaders

(Continued from Page 8)

the blind by having a greater understanding of their problems than most instructors who make an effort to teach us.

Everywhere I go with Elmo, his finely proportioned body, general beauty, training and intelligence attract people and draw from them many expressions of appreciation, which, of course, makes me feel very proud of him and grateful to you in selecting Elmo for me. Had I sent a picked committee of dog experts to your kennels for the purpose of making a selection for me, they could not have done better than you have.

My entire family is so in love with Elmo that the fears which I held at first of possible objections to having such a large dog in a small residence, disturbing the general routine of the household, were soon dispelled, and my fear now is that they will spoil him with too much love.

Needless to say, Elmo leaped into my heart from the beginning and reflected a great deal of love for me, as he seemed to understand that I was blind from the start of our association; and it looks as if we will be together for life.

I am having such pleasure and happiness with him, and my health has been so benefited in being able to take daily walks that the cost of the dog and training, which seemed big at first, has been forgotten, and I feel quite certain that ten times the amount paid could not buy him from me today.

My wish is that every blind person in this country could know you and about the effort you are making to help them meet one of their greatest needs—namely a substitute eyes to aid them in having freedom to go about by themselves—and to be able to own one of the La Salle Kreimer-trained dogs.

Assuring you that I am satisfied with my purchase of Elmo in every way and that I shall always consider myself indebted to you for the personal interest you have taken in my behalf in this matter, and that I will deem it a privilege to have you refer anyone interested to me, with best wishes for your success and that of the La Salle Kennels, I am

Sincerely,

(Signed) W. A. CHRISTENSEN,

Los Angeles, Calif.

## Anti-Distemper Experiment

(Continued from Page 18)

cleansing of the point of incision and adjacent territory.

"Asked how to condition a dog in preparation for the inoculation, I would say that a dog well fed, well cared for and in normal health requires no special conditioning at all. The normal dog is already conditioned or should be under ordinary care. It is true that the presence of worms may hinder the perfect working of the inoculation; at least, we are advised to clear the patient of worms before inoculating if there is any real evidence of infestation. This should be done at least one week previous to the inoculation.

"The next question is an important one: If latent or undeveloped distemper exists in the dog's system at the time of inoculation, will it interfere with the proper working of the preventive? In my opinion, it will, but at the same time I can see no way to obviate this difficulty. Any dog—show dog or pet—runs constant risk of contracting distemper. How are we to know whether a dog has caught the infection and whether a few days hence he will come down with the disease? In many instances, there is absolutely no way of knowing, consequently we will always run a certain amount of risk in injecting this material into dogs already infected. Should distemper manifest itself a few days after the administration of the vaccine, I would not follow with the virus at all because in this case the disease is already at work with its natural immunizing influence."

## Pennsylvania News

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sion in the general public's mind. It was also taken into consideration that England and America are the only two countries that have not returned to the former name of the breed. The club is very desirous of having an opinion expressed by all other shepherd dog clubs as to their feeling on this subject.

A new program which will be of great interest to all of our club members was finally approved and this will start within the next three months.

W. F. ENNIS, Secretary.



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Sinykin, J.L.

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